

Leveraging Contextual Idioms to Enhance Cultural Awareness in the EFL Classroom: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives, Challenges, and Prospects for Future Implementation

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Abstract:

Introduction: Incorporating idiomatic expressions into EFL instruction is widely acknowledged to enhance learners' cultural awareness; however, their inherent metaphorical nature and cultural specificity present considerable challenges for both teachers and students. This study investigates the perspectives of Algerian EFL teachers and students regarding the role of idioms in promoting cultural understanding.

Methods: A mixed-methods approach was employed, gathering quantitative data from 50 third-year EFL students and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine University of Sétif-2. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics, while thematic analysis was used to interpret the qualitative data.

Results: Both students and teachers acknowledge the significance of idioms in fostering cultural awareness. Students expressed a desire for more cultural insights, while teachers emphasised the need for authentic materials and effective pedagogical strategies.

Discussion: The study identifies key pedagogical challenges to effective idiom instruction and proposes practical strategies for aligning such instruction with learners' cultural contexts.

Limitations: The small sample size and the focus on a single institution limit the generalisability of the findings.

Conclusions: This study provides evidence supporting the value of idioms in EFL and offers actionable recommendations for their improved curricular integration.

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Further research is needed to explore these findings in broader educational settings and contexts.

Key words: cultural awareness, contextual idioms, EFL education, pedagogical challenges, Algeria.

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, effective intercultural communication is paramount, establishing cultural awareness as a core tenet of language education. This awareness extends beyond linguistic proficiency, requiring an understanding of a language's embedded customs, traditions, and values. Idiomatic expressions, as culturally rich linguistic forms, offer a lens into these nuances, providing learners with valuable insights into the target culture. These phrases, where meaning is not literal, act as cultural touchstones reflecting societal norms (Smith et al., 2020). In regions like Algeria, where English is a lingua franca, this point is particularly relevant (Smith et al., 2020); cultural awareness is a cornerstone of effective communication and intercultural competence (Scarino, 2010), equipping learners to navigate diverse contexts with empathy.

Cultural awareness underpins language education, fostering connections between learners and native speakers. By raising this awareness, learners gain insights into a target culture, which enhances their linguistic competence and allows them to engage with complex contexts respectfully. The relationship between language and culture is exemplified through idiomatic expressions (Smith et al., 2020). These culturally bound phrases offer instrumental insights into a community's values, enriching learners' linguistic and cultural understanding. Yet, despite these benefits, Algerian EFL teachers face significant hurdles in integrating idioms into their teaching.

These hurdles include limited access to materials, inadequate training in idiomatic usage, and the challenge of aligning idioms with students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Scarino, 2010; Smith et al., 2020), leading to a prioritisation of linguistic proficiency over cultural understanding. This research aims to contribute to the discourse on effective language pedagogy by bridging the gap between theory and practice. It seeks to provide insights that inform the development of more culturally responsive EFL teaching methodologies, empowering learners to engage more meaningfully in a globalised world through enhanced cultural understanding. This is crucial in Algeria, where English is a bridge between cultures and a skill vital for educational development.

In response to these challenges, and the identified research gap, this study explores the perspectives of EFL teachers and students in Algeria regarding the use of idiomatic expressions as a means of nurturing cultural awareness within the classroom. It aims to examine the perceived benefits of integrating idioms, to identify the barriers that hinder their effective implementation, and to propose recommendations for overcoming these challenges. This research is particularly crucial within the Algerian context, where the teaching of English not only remains essential but also serves as a valuable bridge between cultures and as a vital skill for students' educational development. Moreover, the findings of this study may prove beneficial to other countries that encounter similar educational needs and teaching realities.

1 Literature review

Recent discourse in language education has increasingly acknowledged the intrinsic relationship between language and culture. This is reflected in terms such as "languaculture" and "linguaculture," which underline the interconnectedness of these two elements in the learning process (Orlando, 2020). Understanding these concepts is crucial for developing both linguistic proficiency and cultural competence; therefore, language learning should not be perceived as a mere acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, but as a profound engagement with another culture. This recognition of the cultural specificity of language allows educators to adapt instruction to diverse contexts (Jenkins, 2007), moving towards more culturally responsive methodologies. In this context, idioms, as linguistic expressions deeply rooted in culture, play a vital role in fostering intercultural communication and cultural understanding (Brown, 2019; Garcia & Nguyen, 2020).

1.1 The intertwined nature of culture and idioms in EFL education

Cultural awareness is not merely an addendum to language education; it is a fundamental aspect of effective communication, serving as a foundation for fostering connections between learners and speakers of the target language. By raising this awareness, language learners gain a deeper understanding of the customs, traditions, and societal norms that underpin linguistic expression, thereby enabling them to approach diverse cultural contexts with greater empathy and respect. Idiomatic expressions exemplify this intrinsic relationship between language and culture, offering a unique insight into the cultural nuances of a language (Smith et al., 2020). These culturally bound phrases act as conduits, transmitting the beliefs, customs, and values of a particular community, enriching both the cultural and linguistic competence of learners. This point is supported by the recent discourse on "languaculture" and "linguaculture" (Orlando, 2020), which highlights the interconnected nature of language and

culture and the need for a more holistic approach to language teaching. This perspective emphasises the need for EFL educators to recognise the specificity of each language and adapt their instructions accordingly (Jenkins, 2007).

1.2 Idioms as cultural artifacts: A gateway to deeper understanding

Idioms, those figurative expressions whose meanings cannot be directly inferred from their individual words, are far more than mere linguistic devices; they are, in fact, cultural artifacts. As culturally embedded phrases, idioms such as “spill the beans” act as a window into the societal values and thought patterns of English-speaking communities (Smith & González, 2020). This implies that learning idioms transcends mere vocabulary acquisition; it equips learners with the necessary tools to navigate multifaceted cultural contexts and to engage more meaningfully with the target culture. Scarino (2010) highlights the importance of cultural competence, stating that students with a deeper understanding of the target culture are better equipped to engage with language more meaningfully, accentuating the crucial role of idioms in providing cultural insights. Smith and González (2020) support this, highlighting how idiomatic expressions reveal cultural nuances, thus helping students connect more deeply with the language and culture. This view is further reinforced by Liu (2008), who posits that idioms convey deep cultural beliefs, making their mastery an essential step in achieving full language proficiency. Therefore, teaching idioms should not be limited to linguistic competence, but should also include the essential cultural elements of language use.

1.3 Challenges and research gaps in EFL idiom instruction, particularly in the Algerian context

While the benefits of using idioms to enhance cultural awareness are widely acknowledged, EFL teachers often encounter significant challenges when integrating idioms into their teaching practices, particularly within specific contexts, such as Algeria. These challenges manifest in various forms, including the scarcity of appropriate instructional materials, limited opportunities for teacher training in idiomatic usage, and difficulties in aligning idioms with students’ linguistic levels and diverse cultural backgrounds (Scarino, 2010; Smith et al., 2020). This lack of resources and teacher training often leads to EFL teaching methodologies that prioritise linguistic proficiency over cultural understanding, thereby creating a notable gap in effective idiom instruction. Despite the extant research which underscores the importance of idioms in language learning (Liu, 2008; Smith & González, 2020), there remains a persistent gap in addressing the unique challenges faced by Algerian EFL teachers, who often experience limited access to culturally relevant resources and in-depth professional training. Although studies have explored innovative

pedagogical strategies such as storytelling and communicative language teaching (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Liu, 2017), along with the use of digital tools (Scarino, 2010), there is still a need to explore their implementation within the Algerian EFL context. Therefore, future research should investigate these innovative teaching approaches while emphasizing the long-term impacts of idiom learning on both cultural competence and language proficiency (Boers & Eyckmans, 2009).

This study, therefore, is designed to address this critical research gap by exploring the perspectives of both EFL teachers and students in Algeria, focusing on the specific role of idiomatic expressions in enhancing cultural awareness in the classroom. This research is particularly crucial in the Algerian context and will provide a necessary study on the specificities of teaching English in the region. The findings of this research are intended to inform future practices and should be relevant to other countries with similar educational and linguistic contexts.

2 Methodology and materials

This study investigated the role of contextual idioms and teaching materials in enhancing cultural awareness for EFL learners within the Algerian context, while also exploring factors that facilitate or impede this process. The following research questions guided this investigation:

1. How do EFL teachers and students perceive idiomatic expressions as tools for enriching cultural awareness?
 - 1.1. To what extent do EFL teachers incorporate idioms in their English culture teaching?
2. How does the use of idiomatic expressions within specific cultural contexts contribute to the enhancement of learners' cultural awareness?
3. What obstacles do EFL teachers and learners encounter when trying to raise cultural awareness through the use of idioms?
4. What are the expectations regarding future innovations in teaching culture through contextual idioms to contribute to the development of cultural awareness in Algerian EFL settings?

To investigate these research questions, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative instruments. This approach was chosen to provide a more holistic view of the research topic, capturing the breadth of student perceptions through quantitative data and the depth of teacher experiences through qualitative data. This combination facilitates a more detailed analysis, which is essential when exploring complex educational practices.

The quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to fifty (50) third-year students from the English language and literature programme within the LMD system at Setif-2 University in Algeria. These

students were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across all academic tracks within the programme. This sampling method was used to ensure that the findings are more applicable to the entire student cohort. The questionnaire included both open-ended and closed-ended questions, designed to capture a comprehensive range of student perspectives. It was structured into two sections: the first focused on students' perceptions of learning English culture, and the second focused on their familiarity and attitudes toward incorporating idioms into their English language learning experiences. The questionnaire was accessible online between April 25th and May 10th, 2022, and achieved a 91% response rate. However, it is important to acknowledge that this high response rate may indicate a higher level of interest among the participants, which could influence the results.

The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten instructors from the same English department at Setif-2 University. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to capture a variety of teaching experiences and perspectives relevant to the research questions. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, allowing for an in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives on the role of idioms in raising students' cultural awareness. The interviews comprised eleven open-ended questions that explored teachers' familiarity with idiomatic expressions, their integration into the curriculum, and the perceived impact on students' cultural awareness. Whilst this sampling approach aimed to ensure diversity, it is important to acknowledge that the small sample size of teachers limits the generalisability of the findings to a larger population. The interviewed teachers had teaching experience ranging from 8 to 15 years, which is valuable in exploring their experiences with idiom instruction.

2.1 Data Analysis

Following the data collection phase, a rigorous analysis was undertaken to provide clear insights into the research questions.

The quantitative data were statistically analysed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentage distributions, were computed to summarise the survey responses. This statistical analysis facilitated the identification of key trends and patterns within the student responses.

The qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to discern recurring patterns and themes, thereby enriching the understanding of the research phenomena. This method allowed for an in-depth exploration of common viewpoints and experiences among the teachers, offering a more nuanced perspective on the challenges and complexities of teaching idioms in the Algerian context.

The use of this mixed-methods approach was intended to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the role of contextual idioms in EFL education and

their impact on enhancing cultural awareness among Algerian learners. However, it is important to acknowledge that the use of this method is limited by the relatively small sample size and the specific context of the Algerian university. Therefore, the generalisability of the findings needs to be considered within these limitations.

3 Results

This study evaluated the attitudes of EFL teachers and students towards using idiomatic expressions to enhance students' cultural awareness. To accomplish this, descriptive statistics were used to summarise the quantitative questionnaire data, showing the distribution of responses across various categories using frequencies and percentages, and these distributions were further illustrated using graphs, such as bar and pie charts. Additionally, the qualitative interview data were analysed to identify key recurring themes and patterns related to teachers' perspectives on idiomatic expressions and their role in fostering students' cultural awareness. This involved a detailed examination of the interview transcripts to discern underlying meanings, nuances, and key insights from the participants.

3.1 Analysis of questionnaire questions: Student perspectives on culture and idioms

This section presents the findings from the student questionnaire, exploring their attitudes towards learning about English culture and their experiences with idioms.

Q1: Do you like learning about English culture while you study the language?

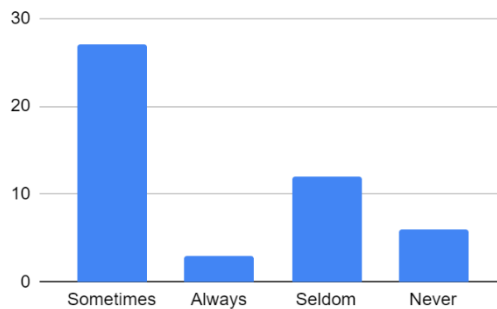


Figure 1. Frequency of learners' attitudes towards integrating culture in the process of English learning (n=50).

The quantitative data revealed varied student attitudes towards integrating culture into language learning. Whilst 27% acknowledged the importance of culture "sometimes," a notably small 4% considered it "always" crucial. This contrasts with the emphasis on culture in existing literature, suggesting a potential disconnect between theory and practice for students. Conversely, 12% viewed learning English culture as "seldom" important, with 6% expressing no interest, highlighting differing values placed on cultural integration. These differing views may affect how students approach the cultural aspects of the language. While most students acknowledged a link between understanding English culture and proficiency, others prioritised maintaining their cultural identity over complete immersion. This highlights the importance of respecting students' backgrounds and approaching cultural integration sensitively, aiming to enhance cultural awareness without imposing external viewpoints.

Q2: How often do your teachers use idioms to convey information about English culture to you?

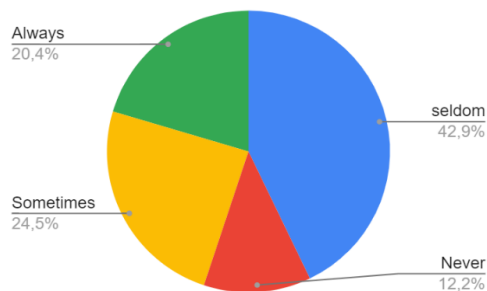


Figure 2. Frequency of teaching English culture through idioms (n=50).

The pie chart illustrates significant variability in students' perceptions of how frequently teachers integrate idioms when teaching English culture. While 20.4% reported their teachers "always" incorporate idioms, and 24.5% "sometimes," a considerable 42.9% stated that their teachers "seldom" use idioms, with 12.2% claiming they were "never" used. This highlights inconsistencies in teachers' pedagogical practices, with a notable portion rarely or never using idioms. This lack of systematic approach may affect student learning experiences and suggests the need for a more balanced approach to teaching culture and idioms.

Q3: How do you perceive learning idioms?

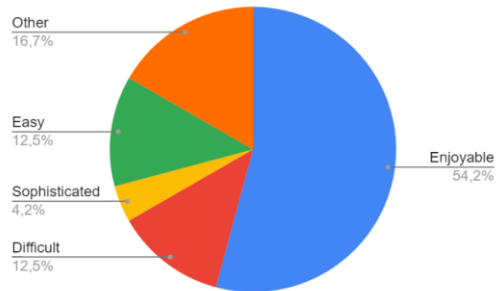


Figure 3. Students' Attitudes towards Learning Idioms Experience (n=50).

Analysis of the perceived difficulty of idioms revealed varied student attitudes. While 12.5% found idioms challenging, particularly in translation, and 4.2% considered them difficult, a substantial 54.2% reported idioms enjoyable and easy to remember. This indicates a divide: some learners struggle with practical aspects, whilst others find idioms useful and engaging. Notably, 16.7% used alternative descriptors, such as "interesting" and "integral to cultural understanding", highlighting the positive value some students place on idioms, and underscoring the need for educators to acknowledge this diverse range of perceptions and approaches when teaching idioms.

Table 1

Learners' perceptions of contextual idioms and their role in raising cultural awareness in foreign language classes

<u>Statements</u>	<u>Learners' Responses</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Idea</u>
1) Do you think it is crucial to incorporate English culture into the process of learning the English language?	91.8%	8.2%	0.0%
2) Are you familiar with the meanings of idioms?	49.0%	30.6%	20.4%
3) Do you consider gaining an understanding of English idioms to be a significant aspect of the process of learning the English language?	82.0%	16.0%	2.0%
4) Do you think it is essential to explore English idioms within their cultural contexts to communicate effectively with native speakers?	76.0%	16.0%	8.0%
5) As an English language learner, can idioms aid in your deeper understanding of English culture?	90.0%	8.0%	2.0%

Table 1 reveals significant key points into students' perceptions regarding the integration of English culture and idioms into language learning. A large majority (91.8%) acknowledged the importance of incorporating English culture, recognising its role in enabling practical communication. Many students also noted the intrinsic link between culture and communication. While 49% were familiar with idioms as metaphorical expressions, 36% were unfamiliar, and 20% were unsure. However, a significant majority (82%) viewed idioms as a useful resource for expanding vocabulary, despite 16% considering them unnecessary. Furthermore, most learners (76%) perceived idioms as essential for effective communication with native speakers, though 18% remained uncertain. Critically, 90% equated studying idioms with understanding English culture, acknowledging them as integral cultural elements, highlighting a need for tailored instruction to enhance cultural and linguistic proficiency.

3.2 Thematic analysis of teachers' perspectives on idiomatic expressions

The interviews, conducted with ten experienced English department teachers from Mohamed Lamine Debaghine University of Setif-2, explored their experiences and perceptions of teaching idiomatic expressions. The teachers' responses provided illuminating perspectives on their views of idioms, their pedagogical practices, and their beliefs concerning the integration of culture within the classroom. The following four major themes, which encapsulate these perspectives, underline the crucial role culture plays in their language instruction, and point towards the need for a more consistent and practical approach within Algerian classrooms:

1. Teacher expertise, training, and professional development:

This theme highlights the impact of teaching experience alongside the acknowledged need for ongoing training. The analysis revealed that whilst seasoned teachers exhibited a deeper understanding of idioms and a wider range of teaching strategies, many acknowledged their limited exposure to native speakers. This underscores a need for professional development that enhances pedagogical knowledge and facilitates practical experiences, allowing teachers to deepen their understanding of idioms and their usage. As one teacher noted, *"While I am familiar with many idioms, I know my own understanding isn't as deep as it should be, particularly in terms of contemporary usage, more exposure to native speakers would make me more confident when teaching them."*, encapsulating the need for more relevant training.

2. Diverse views on the role of culture and idioms in language teaching:

This theme integrates the divergent perspectives on the importance of cultural integration and varied opinions on the role of idioms in language education. The

study revealed a lack of consensus among teachers regarding the significance of culture compared to language skills; whilst some emphasised cultural awareness, others prioritised linguistic competence. Similarly, teachers expressed differing views regarding idioms, with some perceiving them as a useful tool to enrich vocabulary, and others concerned that an over-emphasis could hinder clear communication. This highlights the need for a shared understanding of the value of both culture and idioms in language learning. As one teacher explained, *“I focus more on the grammar and vocabulary, and culture and idioms feel like extras... I am not sure whether they are always helpful to my students if they want to communicate clearly.”*, showing the varied approaches to language teaching.

3. Curriculum gaps, contextualisation, and the need for authentic materials:

This theme combines the gaps in the existing curriculum with the need for contextual teaching. The teachers agreed that the teaching materials used at Algerian universities lack a focus on idioms, and require revision to reflect their value, highlighting a clear disconnect between theory and practice. Furthermore, this theme highlights the need to teach idioms within a cultural framework and to employ authentic, culturally relevant materials. This involves moving from purely theoretical approaches towards more practical, situated learning. Another teacher stated, *“Our teaching materials don’t always provide a cultural context for idioms... students need to learn these in real situations, not just from textbooks”*, showing the pressing need for changes in materials design and teaching methodologies.

4. Student challenges and idioms as tools for cultural awareness:

This theme explores the difficulties students experience when learning idioms, as well as their potential as tools for cultural understanding. Teachers acknowledged that students often struggle with idioms due to their metaphorical nature and the lack of sufficient cultural context, underscoring the importance of contextualised teaching. However, teachers also recognised the potential of idioms to promote cultural awareness and enhance communicative skills, seeing them as a practical means to achieve more comprehensive language learning. One teacher noted, *“Students see idioms as difficult and confusing, unless they understand the cultural situations where these expressions are used. We must use them as a key to understanding English culture, but with care.”*, showing their complex value in a teaching setting.

4 Discussion

The collected data reveal a notable convergence in the views of both students and teachers regarding the value of integrating idiomatic expressions into EFL instruction, with both groups recognising their crucial role in enhancing cultural awareness. This finding directly addresses the first research question, confirming a general perception of idioms as valuable tools for enriching cultural understanding in the Algerian EFL context. Moreover, these positive attitudes align with previous studies, highlighting the role of idioms in facilitating intercultural communication (Brown, 2019; Lee & Wang, 2021), thereby suggesting that both teachers and students acknowledge their significance in language learning. The teachers' perspectives, in particular, further emphasise the importance of idioms in this learning environment, underscoring the relevance of this research.

However, despite this broadly positive perception, the survey data highlight a significant variation in students' actual experiences of idiom integration. While many students appreciate learning about English culture through idioms, a smaller percentage express scepticism about its importance. This divergence in attitudes, alongside inconsistent teacher practices regarding the implementation of idioms, raises concerns about the degree of cultural integration in current teaching approaches, thus reinforcing the need for more consistent and balanced methodologies. The fact that only a small number of students view culture as always crucial implies that individual learner perspectives, cultural backgrounds, and the differing teaching styles may influence these varied viewpoints. This inconsistency needs to be explored more thoroughly when developing a curriculum that serves all students. The findings, therefore, suggest a pressing need for further research into how to effectively reach all students, taking into consideration their different backgrounds and their teachers' different approaches.

The interviews with teachers further illuminate the complexities of this topic, confirming the significance of idioms as a valid means of understanding the cultural context of English, and reflecting the nuances of English-speaking cultures, which corroborates the views presented by Orlando (2020). However, the data also reveal a lack of consensus among teachers regarding the most effective way to incorporate idioms, echoing previous research pinpointing the need for continuous teacher training (Scarino, 2010; Smith et al., 2020). This finding calls for more professional development opportunities that facilitate a shared understanding of best practices, and for further exploration of the disparity in approaches and beliefs in order to provide teachers with more effective guidelines and practical solutions. These findings provide a clear answer to the second research question, while also revealing gaps in current

teaching practices that must be addressed through specific and focused initiatives.

Addressing the third research question, the research acknowledges the significant challenges learners face when mastering idioms, largely due to their metaphorical nature and cultural specificity, which is in line with previous research (Seidlhofer, 2011; Garcia & Nguyen, 2020). The survey data, coupled with teachers' observations, suggests the need for instructional strategies that take into account these specific difficulties. The teachers' comments also indicate a lack of awareness of appropriate strategies and resources to teach idioms effectively, revealing a need for more targeted guidance and support in this specific area. Moreover, both the survey and interview data highlight a significant gap in access to authentic materials, a finding that aligns with literature that confirms the importance of using authentic resources in language teaching (Kramsch, 2014). Therefore, more emphasis should be placed on resources that bridge the divide between the linguistic and cultural learning of idioms.

Finally, touching on the fourth research question, the study confirms the importance of motivation and engagement in language learning, with student feedback highlighting that culturally rich content can be used to enhance learner engagement, thus supporting previous studies (McCarthy, 2008; Dörnyei, 2001). This indicates the potential of idioms to make learning more relevant to students' interests, and a future approach that leverages idioms for this purpose should be thoroughly explored.

5 Recommendations for innovative EFL instruction

Building on this study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance EFL instruction by promoting linguistic proficiency and cultural competence within the Algerian context. Implementing these strategies will enable EFL educators to create more dynamic and culturally rich learning environments, equipping learners for effective communication in diverse global settings.

- *Strategic Curricular Integration:* Idiomatic expressions should be a core component of the EFL curriculum, ensuring consistent exposure to culturally relevant language content. This necessitates a systematic approach, incorporating clear learning objectives and assessment criteria that evaluate both linguistic and cultural understanding. Integrating idioms into specific thematic units can enhance students' contextual awareness and practical relevance.
- *Empowering Professional Development:* Teachers require professional development that empowers them to teach the cultural nuances of idiomatic expressions effectively. This should include specialised training with hands-

on activities, collaborative learning, and practice-oriented sessions. Furthermore, such professional development should provide teachers with the skills to create culturally sensitive and engaging teaching materials, and encourage opportunities for immersive experiences.

- *Contextualised and Creative Teaching:* Teaching should prioritize rich cultural contexts, moving beyond rote memorisation to more creative methods. Multimedia resources, storytelling, and real-life examples should be used to present idioms authentically and enhance comprehension. As Bara (2023) highlights, idioms are a gateway into culture; therefore, teaching approaches should value both linguistic and cultural aspects.
- *Authentic Engagement with Materials and Speakers:* Authentic English materials and conversations with native speakers are essential to provide realistic language scenarios. Students should be encouraged to discuss and collaborate critically, while online platforms for virtual cultural exchanges can offer additional opportunities to enhance their cultural learning and develop practical communication skills.
- *Innovative Cultural Exchange Programmes:* Cultural exchange programmes should promote meaningful, long-term interactions, such as joint online projects, alongside the use of virtual and augmented reality technologies to create immersive and accessible cultural experiences in the classroom.

Conclusions

This study explored the perspectives of EFL teachers and third-year LMD students at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine University of Setif-2 regarding the integration of idiomatic expressions in language instruction. The findings reveal a notable consensus among both teachers and students, indicating a strong preference for incorporating idioms into the EFL curriculum, in recognition of their critical role in enhancing both English proficiency and cultural awareness.

The research highlights the significant challenges learners encounter in comprehending and translating idioms, largely due to their inherent metaphorical nature and cultural specificity. However, despite these difficulties, the study highlights the importance of idiomatic expressions in language learning, aligning with existing literature. Additionally, this study underscores the pressing need for effective instructional strategies that prioritise contextual teaching and the use of authentic materials to facilitate the understanding and retention of idioms.

Both teachers and students acknowledged the intrinsic value of idiomatic expressions in fostering cultural understanding. This study advocates that idioms serve as invaluable tools for gaining deeper insights into the cultural nuances of English-speaking nations, which, in turn, is crucial for achieving comprehensive language proficiency.

In conclusion, this research unequivocally reaffirms the necessity of integrating cultural aspects into language learning, particularly through idiomatic expressions. The diverse perspectives of students and teachers spotlight the need for nuanced, flexible teaching approaches that carefully balance linguistic proficiency with cultural understanding. Effective instructional strategies, including the use of visual aids, narratives, and authentic materials, are essential for successfully incorporating idioms into EFL education. Educators can cultivate a deeper cultural understanding among their learners and enhance their overall language proficiency, creating more effective and culturally sensitive educational environments by adopting these strategies.

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